For Implementers: Gender at USAID

Gender equality is a necessary component of development work as it ensures that women and men have equal opportunities to realize their full potentials and to contribute to the economic and social development of their country. USAID/Russia considers gender to be a cross-cutting theme throughout programming and is committed to providing development assistance that improves the lives of women, men and children in Russia. When gender is considered as part of programming, development programs are more likely to achieve their desired outcomes, result in greater social equity and lead to lasting transformational development.

Implementing partners should take gender into consideration when designing their own projects under USAID programs. "Gender mainstreaming" is the term used in development work to describe the process of integrating a gender perspective into all stages of project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In brief, gender mainstreaming means that any potential inequalities and differences between men and women have been analyzed and then the project adjusted to assure that both women and men are equal beneficiaries. There are a number of frameworks and methodologies for gender mainstreaming that can be studied in detail, but below are a few simple steps that have been adapted from several sources. These steps should assist implementers to better respond to gender requirements when working with USAID.

1. Getting Started

The term "gender" refers to the economic, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. Gender is not a synonym for "women" but refers to the different roles, rights and opportunities of men and women as well as relations between men and women. So considering gender in project design, implementation and evaluation means looking at differences between the experiences, opportunities and rights of women and men and examining why these disparities exist. It should be determined how the project will address these differences in order to ensure positive outcomes for both women and men.

2. The Stakeholders

Examine who are the stakeholders that will be involved in all stages of the project- in the implementation and as beneficiaries. Look specifically at whether there is gender balance among the stakeholders or whether they have a gender perspective.

3. The Problem to be Addressed

Determine the precise development problem that your project will address. Next, look carefully at whether this issue or problem affects men and women differently. For this type of analysis, it is useful to look at statistical data (for example, on male and female employment rates), research (for example, into risk factors for HIV infection) and also at historical and current gender imbalances in specific fields (for example, current numbers of women in political office).

4. The Goal of the Project

Determine what the project intends to achieve (for example, greater citizen participation in local self governance) and then ask what should be achieved in regard to gender in order to ensure that the overall goal will be met. Using the above example, "greater citizen participation" refers to the participation of *both* men and women. If this is the overall goal, the project should build in interventions that will remedy any imbalances in women's or men's participation. This means that the overall goal will address the needs of both men and women. This type of project would be considered "gender-sensitive" in its planning and implementation.

It is also possible that the project as a whole will focus on improving how the system addresses men and women. If it were found, for example, that there were no women in local government office in a particular region, a goal of the project could be to increase women's presence in elected positions in order to change the system. These goals are "transformative." In many cases, a larger project could include several activities- some of which are gender sensitive and some of which are gender transformative.

5. Understanding the Situation

Once the development problem and goals are clear, it is useful to undertake a more detailed "mapping" exercise in order to later define precise activities. This exercise should be a process of information gathering on how precisely men and women are affected in the given context. There are several areas of inquiry that can help to better map the gender context for the project:

- ✓ Where are there differences in the roles and responsibilities of men and women? In what areas is there greater participation of men? Of women? Are there barriers to a more equitable division of labor?

- ✓ Who has access to and control over resources and assets? Think about "assets" broadly- these can include financial and natural assets but also human assets (education, training) and social assets (social networks).

- ✓ What kinds of decision-making processes do men and women participate in? Think about all levels of decision-making, from the governmental, to the community, to the household level. Are there any constraints to women's participation in decision-making? These can be formal constraints but will most likely be constraints based on tradition, culture, custom etc.

It should further be asked, what types of policies exist, what interventions have been used already and what other projects exist regarding the gender dimensions of the specific project. It is also useful to consult the work of gender experts in a particular field or to engage with groups working on these topics locally. Assessing projects that have been funded by other donors in this area can also help establish the precise situation to be addressed.

6. Designing Interventions and Activities

Once the project goals are clear and the situation regarding gender differences has been determined, the specific activities can be planned. It is important to involve stakeholders, both women and men, in the activity design process. Sector-specific guides on gender integration may also prove useful in activity design. In designing specific interventions, think about the extent to which social and historical disparities can be addressed through the activities, given limits in resources. Plans on supporting women's organizations, targeting women specifically or ensuring the participation of men should be built into activities from the beginning.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Finally, once the project is underway, it is important to keep gender issues in focus. Progress toward the original goals should be monitored as well as how the project is being implemented. Many projects regularly collect sex-disaggregated data or may even have sex-specific indicators or targets. Most sex-disaggregated data on its own gives very little information, but it can help to paint a picture of how the project is progressing. These data should be thought of as a starting point and reviewed from time to time. At the same time, there should be a more substantial assessment of how the project is progressing and whether or not it is sufficiently addressing gender issues. Is the project on track to meet the goals regarding gender? Was the mapping accurate of how gender would be implicated in the project? Are there any hindrances or barriers in the process toward gender balance? Is there a need to reassess the goals?

U.S. Government Resources

The Women in Development Office (WID) website profiles priority areas where USAID works around the world, has news about specific projects and includes information on the integration of gender across USAID's development portfolio. http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/

The Interagency Gender Working Group is a network of NGOs, USAID, the Bureau for Global Health of USAID and other U.S. agencies. The focus of the working group is to promote gender equity in the area of health, and the site offers a number of tools for integrating gender into specific health programs (gender-based violence, reproductive health, HIV/ AIDS), resources on interrelations between health and gender issues, as well as background materials on working with men. http://www.igwg.org/

The U.S. State Department's Office for International Women's Issues is the body that coordinates all foreign policy issues related to the political, economic, and social advancement of women in democracy worldwide. The Office for International Women's Issues mobilizes support for women's empowerment, promotes greater awareness of gender-based violence and discrimination, and ensures that women's human rights are considered in the development of U.S. foreign policy. http://www.state.gov/g/wi/

The U.S. State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons is the body that coordinates anti-trafficking efforts both in the U.S. and internationally. The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons provides tools to combat trafficking in persons, many of which can be accessed on its site, such as annual reports on the problem of trafficking worldwide, training materials and a grants program. http://www.state.gov/g/tip/

Other Resources on Gender Mainstreaming:

The United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) has a toolkit in both English and Russian, *Gender Mainstreaming in Practice*, which aims to simplify the process of gender mainstreaming so that it can be used by a wider number of people doing development work. This guide is also useful for USAID implementing partners. Part 1 of the Kit describes ten steps to gender mainstreaming and includes basic principles of gender equality and a guide for conducting gender analysis. Part 2 consists of sector-specific briefs on the gender issues relevant to several topics. http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/6D8DE77F-F203-1EE9-B2E5652990E8B4B9

The Gender Equality Division of the World Bank has tools for mainstreaming gender that includes links to development resources on gender as well as to sector-specific toolkits on gender analysis and "how to" strategies for gender integration into specific programs. www.worldbank.org/gender/

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development site hosts a large number of Gender Tip Sheets that provide background information on integrating a gender perspective into development activities. http://www.oecd.org/document/34/0,3343,en_2649_34541_1896290_1_1_1_1,00.html